

not a good thing for freedom. The truth is that, when one's freedom is taken away, it affects potentially all of us in having our freedoms taken away.

The truth is that all Americans are at risk when bad actors in law enforcement are allowed to act badly and with impunity. All Americans are at risk.

I know that, Congressman JEFFRIES, you represent New York, and I know that when the two officers lost their lives at the hand of a bad guy who ambushed and killed two innocent police officers in New York, thousands of police officers came to the funeral to see off their fallen brothers, as they should do. Many other Americans watched on TV.

I was, quite frankly, greatly disturbed when the police officers—some of the New York officers—turned their backs on the civilian head of the city of New York. They turned their backs to the mayor as he was speaking at the funeral, a sign of disrespect for civilian authority.

That attitude contributes to the thinking of some law enforcement officers that it is okay and that whatever they do is acceptable. The police organizations must come to grips with the fact that they have a responsibility to do the right thing when one of their own does the wrong thing. They have a responsibility to do so.

I know that many, many police departments don't pay their officers very well. Civil servants, in general, are not paid commensurate with the value of their services to the people that they are serving, and police are no different than that.

Police officers have the same concerns that we have, that civilians have. Sometimes, they have problems at home with their wives. They have problems with their children. They have bills to pay. They might be a little bit behind. They have a lot of pressure.

I think we should do a little more in the area of mental health evaluation and counseling and help for our officers. We should encourage them to come forward if they are hurting. It should be a part of the culture of law enforcement that you are not too big and not too powerful to be able to ask for the help that you need. Our society should be willing to give them that help, and we should be willing to pay for it as well.

This issue of Black males being killed by police officers, there are no simple solutions. There are a number of solutions that can help make this situation better. That is why we in Congress and others in State legislatures and city councils and county commissions should be discussing this issue.

We should be trying to do what is necessary to break down the systemic problems that have led to this result and to do something about those problems, to get those problems alleviated and eventually eliminated.

I am so happy that you have seen, Congressman JEFFRIES, the need for

this to be a topic of discussion, and I deeply appreciate the opportunity to come here and to participate in this discussion with you. I will let you know that I am looking forward to continuing to work with you as we do what we know that we need to do in order for Congress to address this issue.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his continued leadership and involvement in this issue in trying to bring about resolution.

As we prepare to close, let me, again, make clear that, in my view and the view of, I believe, many throughout this body and across this country, we know that the police officers—the overwhelming majority of law enforcement officials—go to work every day trying to do the right thing.

It is a difficult job; but, because you have the capacity to take a life, we have got to make sure that, when you exercise deadly force, that it is deployed only in circumstances where it is absolutely necessary, not a choke hold resulting in the strangulation of someone who is selling untaxed cigarettes, who pleads for his life 11 times and is killed on video for all of his six children to see.

We don't want to see deadly force used when someone who has been tased is running away. The Supreme Court said in 1985 that you can't use deadly force to stop a fleeing felon. Walter Scott wasn't even a felon. He stopped him because he had a broken taillight.

We just want to make sure that, in America, there is a balance between effective law enforcement on the one hand and a healthy respect for the Constitution and for civil rights and for equal protection under the law for everyone on the other. That is our objective.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on April 4, 2015 in North Charleston, South Carolina, following a traffic stop in broad daylight, Walter Scott was fatally shot by police officer Michael Slager. This tragedy once again brings to the forefront an issue that continues to plague communities nationwide—the alarming rate of African American deaths at the hands of law enforcement officers. Particularly troubling about this tragedy, is the video footage showing the officer firing eight times as Walter Scott is running away.

Walter Scott was a human whose life had value. He was a father, a brother, a son and a friend. His status as an American citizen gave him the right to due process. He should not have been killed by a police officer who acted, without authority, as judge, jury and executioner.

Time and again, African American families have grieved over their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons, who have been taken too soon by officers deputized with the power to protect them. The frequency of these tragedies continues to play into the deeply painful narrative that black life is not valued in this country. When I think of Walter Scott, I think

of Edward Garner, Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Anthony Lee, and Oscar Grant. I think of their grieving families and their lost futures. I am deeply saddened that the list of unarmed black men killed by police continues to grow.

Where do we go from here?

I would echo the words of Albert Einstein: "the world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything." We must all act to protect the lives of our friends and neighbors. As a country, we must commit to recognizing the humanity in others. Before we identify with any race, religion, gender, or sexual preference, we are all human.

It is not likely that, in the absence of Mr. Feidin Santana's cell phone video, Michael Slager would ever face criminal charges. It is not likely that the investigators who investigate the police would have concluded that the officer's account of the shooting was fabricated. It is likely that, in the absence of one bystander's courage, Walter Scott would have been villainized and the police officer who gunned him down would have gotten away with murder. From this point forward, we must all have the courage to speak up and confront injustice.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and the balance of the week on account of a family emergency.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 39 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1073. A letter from the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Janet C. Wolfenbarger, United States Air Force, and her advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1074. A letter from the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Thomas W. Travis, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1075. A letter from the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Salvatore A. Angelella, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

1076. A letter from the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved